







2003 Centennial Edition of the Visitor's Guide to Wind Cave National Park

Wind Cave

A National Treasure

merica's national parks are amaz-Aing mountain vistas, rolling rivers, glacier carved canyons, and underground mysteries. Yet they are more than that. They are places to engage our spirit and hike beyond our imaginations. They are the special places in our hearts that we visit when we need the renewal that the simple grandeur of the natural world can bring. We visit

We visit national parks to be as children again.

national parks not only to watch the river carve the canyon or to watch bison roam the prairie, we visit to let nature draw us back to simpler days when we had time to enjoy the sunrise, smell blossoms, and listen to the bird singing in the willow branches. We visit national parks to be as children again.

Wind Cave is one of those special places. As early as 1890 the unique formations of Wind Cave were dazzling visitors and geologists alike. The most unusual aspect of the cave is the boxwork that decorates the ceilings and walls. Geologists estimate about 95% of all the world's boxwork is found within Wind Cave. As exploration continued, the underground maze revealed more rare and unusual wonders.

When Wind Cave was set aside as a national park in 1903, little more than eight miles of cave were known. It was not until a revived interest in exploration occurred in the 1960s that the full complexity and length of the cave began to emerge. Exploration continues today, and more than 108 miles of cave have been discovered, making this the sixth-longest cave in the world. All of these passageways fit

underneath a one square surface mile, creating the most complex, interconnected, subterranean maze in the entire world. When added together these features make Wind Cave one of the world's greatest underground treasures.

Above the cave, Wind Cave National Park preserves 28,295 acres of mixed-grass prairie and ponderosa pine forest. As the vast prairie of the Great Plains retreated to make way for farms and ranches, habitats for thousands of different organisms disappeared. In 1912, Congress established the Wind Cave National Game Preserve as a place for the return of bison, elk, and pronghorn to the South Dakota prairie. With the preservation of the wildlife came the preservation of the vanishing prairie. Eastern and western species of plants found across the country converge in this area, producing a diversity rivaled by few environments. It is this complex prairie ecosystem that allows the amazing wildlife to flourish once more in the

"A national park is a place where nature should take its course.' Statement of a 5th grade student visiting the park.

Great Plains. In 1934, Wind Cave National Park and the Game Preserve merged, creating the Wind Cave National Park we know it today.

Whether one gazes upon a herd of two hundred bison amidst the swaying prairie grasses or a headlamp illuminates paper thin gypsum needles three hundred feet beneath the Earth's surface, Wind Cave National Park preserves the wonders and mysteries of the American imagination.

Wind Cave National Park is dedicated to preserving an internationally significant cave and a mixed-grass prairie ecosystem with bison and other native wildlife for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

The Oldest National Parks

- 1. Yellowstone, 1872
- 2. Sequoia, 1890
- 3. Yosemite, 1890
- 4. General Grant, now part of King's Canyon,

1890

- 5. Mt Rainier, 1899
- 6. Crater Lake, 1902
- 7. Wind Cave, 1903

Contacting the park: In case of **Emergency** dial 911 Visitor Center: 605-745-4600 www.nps.gov/wica/

Visitor Information

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

If you are planning your visit or doing a project about Wind Cave, look for us on the Internet at www.nps.gov/wica/. Our website has almost anything you might want to know about the park, the cave, the animals, or the plants. We have even included some animal sounds! If you want to know what is happening in the park, this is the place to be.



FOOD, LODGING, AND GASOLINE

Wind Cave National Park operates one campground and has limited food and beverage vending services in the visitor center. There are no lodging, gasoline, grocery, or restaurant services available in the park. These are available in the nearby towns of Hot Springs (15 minutes south) and Custer (25 minutes north). The town of Pringle (10 minutes west) has gasoline and limited food services. For information regarding services in Hot Springs, call (605) 745-4140 or (800) 325-6991. For services in Custer, call (605) 673-2244 or from out of state call (800) 992-9818.



Custer State Park, bordering Wind Cave National Park on the north, has campgrounds, restaurants, motels, and some grocery services. Information about Custer State Park is available by calling (605)-255-4515. For information about state park lodging, please call (800) 658-3530.

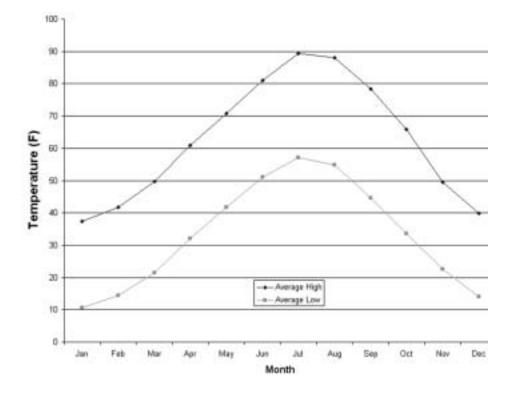
WEATHER

Wind Cave National Park and the rest of the southern Black Hills are much warmer and drier than the northern hills. Winter snowfall averages 30 inches annually. The spring and fall can be warm and sunny or rainy and snowy with a chilly wind. Summer brings warm day-time temperatures with cool evenings.

Severe thunderstorms are common in June and July and occasionally in August. Thunderstorms can be dangerous and visitors should be prepared for them. Large hail is common and the storms can produce severe lightning.

Slow moving storms can dump great amounts of rain over a small area. The steep canyons, rock cliffs, and small creeks of the Black Hills are prone to flash flooding. Be cautious when camping near a creek bed even if it is dry.

For current forecasts and warnings, listen to NOAA Weather Radio on 162.425 MHz in the southern Black Hills or 162.550 MHz in Rapid City.



RANGER PROGRAMS

When planning your visit, consider attending a ranger-led program. There are many interesting programs each day. Programs include a hike on the prairie or in the forest investigating the natural history of the park. Topics might include edible plants, the relationships of the park's animals and plants, the effects of exotic plants, or the importance of fire to the park's ecosystems. For more information, please ask at the visitor center information desk.

Nightly, during the summer months, park rangers present campfire programs. These are great opportunities to learn about the park.
Again, the topics vary.
Check with the campground hosts or at the visitor center information



desk for more information.

Cave tours are offered daily (except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day) throughout the year. Tours provide opportunities to discover the unique features of this unusual cave. Tour schedules vary throughout the year and are listed on page 7.

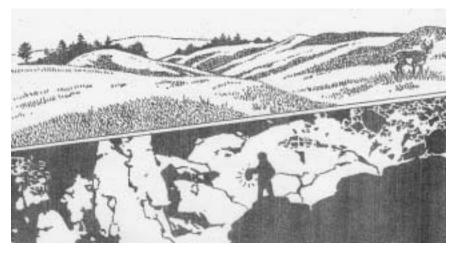
VISITOR CENTER EXHIBITS

The visitor center is a great place to start your park visit. Whether you are intrigued with the cave, prairie, or both, it is easy to discover more about the park by exploring the exhibit rooms.

The upper exhibit room has displays ranging from how the Plains Indians used the bison to how the park manages the prairie. The cave exhibit room explains cave formations and the colorful

history of the park. In the lower exhibit room, a slide program explains the development of the cave. A video about the cave, the prairie, and the park is shown in our auditorium.

Stop in the visitor center for information about cave tours or to explore the exhibit rooms or for maps, book sales, backcountry permits, and Golden Age and Golden Access Passports, or National Parks Passes.



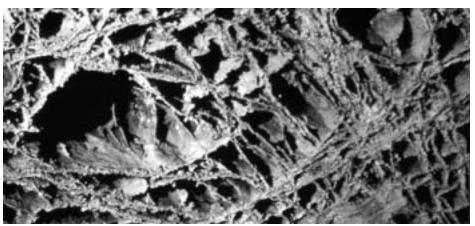
THE CAVE

Wind Cave is quite different from other caves. Instead of stalactites and stalagmites, the cave is decorated with boxwork (pictured below). Boxwork is a crystalline formation that probably predates the cave. We believe that it formed in tiny cracks within the limestone. Later, when the cave formed, the water dissolved the limestone and the delicate crystal fins that

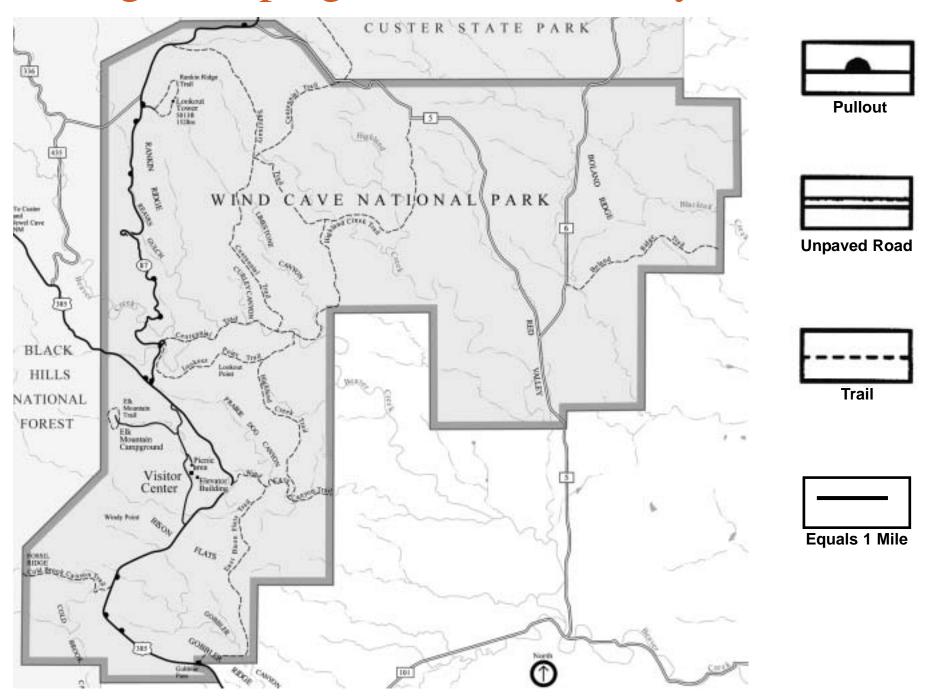
filled the cracks were revealed.

Wind Cave is also known for the maze-like configuration of its passageways. Few caves are longer or more complex. All of the known cave passageways lie beneath a land area of about onesquare mile.

To see the cave, stop at the visitor center. A complete schedule of available tours for the year is on page 7.



Hiking, Camping, and Backcountry



HIKING TRAILS



Wind Cave National Park includes 29 207 includes 28,295 acres of prairie grasslands and ponderosa pine forest. The park is a fascinating combination of ecosystems where eastern and western habitats meet. They support a diverse assortment of life. Hiking any of the 30 miles of trails can help visitors better understand the park. You may want to leave the trails and travel cross-country along the ridges, through the canyons, or across the rolling prairie. A topographic map is recommended and can be purchased at the visitor center.

CENTENNIAL TRAIL

An excellent example of the park's diversity is Wind Cave's six-mile section of the Centennial Trail. This trail crosses the prairie, climbs forested ridges, and explores the wetter, riparian habitat of Beaver Creek. This 111-mile trail meanders from Wind Cave National Park north through the Black Hills.

NATURE TRAILS

There are three self-guided nature trails in the park. The Rankin Ridge Nature Trail leads to the highest point in the park, where the views are spectacular. The Elk Mountain Nature Trail explores an ecotone, or meeting zone, where the grassland and forest converge. The Prairie Vista Nature Trail starts at the visitor center and explores the prairie grasslands. Booklets are available at the trailheads. The trails are about one mile in length.

CAMPING

Wind Cave National Park maintains a developed campground one-mile north of the visitor center. The campground is open from the first Monday in April until the last Monday in October. The campground rarely fills to capacity.

Occupancy is on a first-come, first-served basis. Each site accommodates up to eight people. There are two sites accessible for campers with disabilities. Restrooms have cold water and flush toilets, but no showers or dump stations.

The fee for camping is \$12.00 per night from mid-May to mid-September. From April to mid-May and mid-September to late October, facilities at the campground are reduced. The fee is \$6.00 per night during these times. Visitors holding a Golden Age or Golden Access Passport pay a half-price fee. The campground is closed from late October until the first Monday in April. Group camping reservations are available. Contact the park at (605) 745-4600 for information or group reservations.

BACKCOUNTRY CAMPING

The backcountry of Wind Cave National Park offers visitors an excellent opportunity to experience and enjoy the abundant resources of the park.

Backcountry camping is permitted in the northwestern part of the park. Within this area are several different habitats - prairie,

forest, and riparian - with a variety of plants and animals living there.

Backcountry campers must have a permit. Permits are free and can be obtained at the visitor center or at either of the Centennial Trailheads. Please leave no trace of your visit.

PROTECTING PARK RESOURCES

Park resources are for everyone to enjoy.
Antlers, bones, rocks, and plants are part of the ecosystem and important for the survival of some animals. Please do not collect or remove anything from the park.

Please do not feed the wildlife. When you feed animals they become attracted to highways where they can be struck by passing vehi-

cles. They also may become dependent on handouts and may not survive the winter.

Bison frequent prairie dog towns. They can run 35 mph and may weigh a ton! Rattle-snakes may also be found in dog towns and in rocky areas of the park. Do not approach any wildlife. Animals in the park are wild and unpredictable. Please respect them and give them

plenty of space.

When driving park roads, obey all speed limits. They are designed to pro-

tect you and the wildlife. Do not leave traces of your visit. Litter is unsightly and spoils the park experience for everyone.



Wind Cave Timeline: 1881-1911

- 1881 --- Tom and Jesse Bingham described finding Wind Cave.
 --- Charlie Crary credited as the
- first person to enter Wind Cave.

 1889 ---The South Dakota Mining Co.
 established claim on Wind Cave.
- ---South Dakota became a state.

 1890 ---The South Dakota Mining Co.
 hired J. D. McDonald as manag
 - er of Wind Cave.
 ---J.D. McDonald and the older children of the family (Mary, Alvin, and Elmer) moved to Wind Cave.
- 1891 --- January: Alvin McDonald discovered the Assembly Room.
 - ---July: Alvin McDonald discovered the Coliseum, Tabernacle, and Pearly Gates.
 - ---Regular tours of Wind Cave began with Chris Jenson establishing a stagecoach route from Hot Springs.
 - ---The Stabler family acquired homesteads near cave entrance.
- 1892 --- March: Alvin McDonald discovered the Fairgrounds.
 - ---May: Alvin McDonald discovered Columbian Hall.
 - ---John Stabler bought part interest in the cave, creating the Wonderful Wind Cave Improvement Company.
 - --- The Wind Cave Hotel built.
- 1893 --- William Jennings Bryan visited Wind Cave.
 - ---Professor Paul Alexander Johnstone found a hatpin hidden within Wind Cave.
 - ---Alvin McDonald died on December 15th at age 20.
- 1894 ---McDonald and Stabler defended their ownership of the cave against the South Dakota Mining Company.
- 1896 ---Prominent geologist Luella Agnes Owens visited, creating her theory that ancient geyser activity formed the cave.
 - ---Stabler reported to the Hot Springs Star that he still has an interest in Wind Cave no matter what McDonald says. This was the first of many disputes spanning the next several years.
- 1897 ---McDonald was accused of "jumping" the land and appealed his case to the Secretary of the Interior.
- 1900 ---Department of the Interior officially decides neither the McDonalds nor the Stablers own the cave due to failure to comply with the Homestead Act and to mining claims.
- 1901 ---1,000 acres around Wind Cave's entrance preserved from mineral or agriculture use.
- 1902 ---First government survey of the cave completed in April. ---Cave tour fee: \$0.50.
- 1903 --- January 9, President Theodore Roosevelt signed Wind Cave National Park legislation. Park size: 10,522.17 acres.
- 1910 ---Secretary of Interior Richard Ballenger suggested that Wind Cave was not significant enough to be a true national park.
- 1911 ---Reports were sent to the American Bison Society that suggested Wind Cave land was suitable for a game preserve.

A Windy Cave Hunter Frightened Out of His Wits

Although holes in the Black Hills that blew wind have been known by American Indians for centuries, the first written account of Wind Cave came from a hunter in 1881. Tom Bingham sat down to rest and was startled by the sound of rushing wind on a calm day. While looking for the source of the noise, he experienced a hair-

raising sensation as his hat was lifted from his head and thrown into the air.

Tom declared afterwards that, although frightened nearly out of his wits, he was determined to find the cause of his alarm.

Turning slightly, he discovered a hole about eight by twelve inches in size through which a roaring wind was issuing. Tom



"Blowhole" entrance to Wind Cave

Permanent Guide of Wind Cave

Alvin Frank McDonald, at the age of sixteen, was the first person to systematically explore and later guide tours through Wind Cave. He came to the area with his family in 1890. With nothing but a ball of twine and a candle, he entered the cave almost every day to explore or guide other people. He kept a journal of his discoveries. During his time exploring, he found about eight miles of cave. It is through his journal (on display in the visitor center) that we learn about the early days at Wind Cave.

December 15th, 1893

Alvin McDonald, chief guide at Wind Cave, died from complications of typhoid fever. The Hot Springs Star reported: *He has spent most of his time in exploring and opening up that great natural wonder.*



Alvin McDonald

Wind Cave a Reserve Secretary of the Interior Decides

On December 7, 1900, the Secretary of the Interior affirmed the decision in the case of South Dakota Mining Co. and the Black Hills Wind Cave Co. against Jesse D. McDonald. The decision declared that neither party was entitled to the cave.

After years of feuding, the



Wind Cave becomes a National Park January 9th, 1903.

land office decided that in the first place, the cave had no mineral value and the mining companies had no claim to it. In the second place, J.D. McDonald did not comply with laws related to his homestead and his entry was cancelled.

The Secretary directed the land be held in reserve until Congress shall have the opportunity to create a permanent reserve.

Because of this court case, the lands around Wind Cave remained in federal ownership. Local citizens, recognizing its value, appealed to the government to protect the cave by making it a national park.

spent an hour laying his hat across the opening and watching its projection into the sky; soon after he set out to tell the world of this wonderful discovery.

He Found The Pin!

Professor Paul Alexander Johnstone, a famous mind reader, adventured to Wind Cave to display his special abilities on June 9, 1893. Deep within the cave, a lady's hatpin had been hidden by Hot Springs residents.

Blindfolded, Johnstone proceeded to search for the pin using only his mind-reading abilities. Three days later, Johnstone found the pin!

Upon completion of his task, his physical powers gave way and he fell prostrate and unconscious. He was carried from the cave on a stretcher, but later fully recovered from the ordeal.

It was activities such as this that propelled Wind Cave into the newspaper headlines and helped make the cave famous.

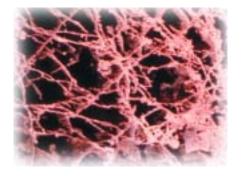


Frostwork

Geologist Visits

Prominent geologist Luella Agnes Owen visited Wind Cave on August 16, 1896. During her stay, she created the first theory about how the cave was formed.

Luella's theory: 1) fissures in the earth were opened by volcanic activity, 2) groundwater filled the fissures, 3) geyser activity enlarged the fissures and decorated the passageways, and 4) geyser activity ceased and the groundwater drained from the cave. Her experiences were compiled in the 1898 book: *Cave Regions of the Ozarks and Black Hills*. Ms. Owen's book helped the world to see how unusual this cave is.



Boxwork

1912-1966

A Game Preserve is Established

The Bison Arrive

On November 28, 1913, a herd of fourteen bison arrived at Wind Cave National Park after traveling from the Bronx Zoo in New York. Through the early efforts of the American Bison Society, bison roam the Wind Cave prairie.

Elk and Pronghorn

The Wind Cave National Game Preserve received a herd of twenty-one Rocky Mountain elk from Jackson Hole in 1914. Later that year, thirteen pronghorn antelope arrived from Brooks, Alberta, returning these species to prairie prominence.



Pronghorn on the prairie

Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) Construction: 1934-1942 Improving Wind Cave National Park



CCC installing lighting cables



CCC constructing the elevator building

Two Worlds Connect

On June 15, 1935, Wind Cave National Park gained control over the Game Preserve lands. This ended dual government authority on the land and combined the surface and subsurface worlds into one National Park. In retrospect, this was an important milestone for cave preservation, because without surface protection, pollutants from the surface might infiltrate the cave, damaging its fragile environment. These two worlds are forever connected.



Park Service Entrance Sign



Red Valley

Park Expansion

In 1946, legislation was approved to add the Custer **Recreational Demonstration** Area lands to Wind Cave National Park, tripling the park's size from 11,818 to 28,059 acres. This increase added Rankin Ridge, Red Valley, and Boland Ridge to the park. This expansion increased the habitat for bison and elk and preserved more of the dwindling mixedgrass prairie.



CCC hauling concrete



CCC stoneworking

Spillway Found

In 1964, crawling under an unpromising ledge, explorers Dave Schnute and Herb and Jan Conn stumbled across the most important passageway in the cave. This passageway, later named "Spillway," has led to more than sixty miles of cave. Another route to the cave's "Western Wilderness" was not found until 1986.



Snowdrift Avenue

	_
•)
Wind Cave National Game	1912
Preserve was established within the existing park boundary.	1712
The National Bison Society brought fourteen bison from	1913
New York to the PreserveTwenty-one elk arrived from Jackson Hole, WY.	1914
Thirteen pronghorn antelope arrived from Brooks, Alberta.	
The Organic Act created the National Park Service.	1916
The superintendent reported Wind Cave was 100 miles long,	1920
and 1,500 feet deepCuster State Park Game	
Preserve createdThe first bison round-up to	1923
reduce herd size occurredPark Service Director, Stephen T. Mather visited the park.	1928
Norbeck Dam was constructed as a water source for the Game	1929
PreservePark Service Director, Horace B. Albright visited the park.	1931
The first electric lighting system was installed in cave.	
The CCC camp (NP-1) was established at Wind Cave	1934
National ParkConstruction began on the	
elevator shaftWind Cave and the Game	1935
Preserve merge, managed by Wind Cave National Park.	
The first concrete stairs and handrails were installed in the cave by the CCC.	
Cave tour fee: \$0.75. Trap door entrance to cave	1936
replaced with a walk-in entranceFirst Lakota encampment in	1937
parkOn May 1, the last grazing	1939
permits were canceled and a bison and elk reduction program	
startedMassive wooden door was	1940
placed at Walk-In EntranceA fire tower was erected at Elk	
MountainThe CCC camp closed.	1942

---Cave tour fee: \$0.50.

filmed at Wind Cave.

entered Wind Cave.

Cave National Park

opened.

installed in Wind Cave.

acres occurred.

--- A major park boundary expan- 1946

---The original cedar pole fire 1952

---Disney's Vanishing Prairie 1954

---The one-millionth visitor 1955

---Highway 87 opened, connect- 1956

---The second elevator was 1959

---The first campfire program 1960

---The first Spelunking Tour was 1962

---Elk Mountain Campground 1963

--- Cave explorers discovered the 1964

---Wind Cave was designated an 1965

---Two hundred and ten visitors 1966

sion from 11,818.94 to 28,059.36

tower at Rankin Ridge was built.

ing Custer State Park with Wind

was presented at a campground

located at what is now the picnic

Spillway, which led to over sixty

on one tour, largest tour given.

miles of cave passageway.

official fallout shelter.



Ranger Programs

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Wind Cave offers a variety of wonderful opportunities to learn about the park's natural resources. Ranger guided hikes, cave tours, and campfire programs provide information about many different aspects of the park. Exploring the visitor center, participating in the Junior Ranger Program, or hiking park trails are also great ways to discover what is special about this national park.

Teachers wanting an opportunity for their students can participate in the park's *Connections* program. This *Parks as Classrooms* program allows students to explore the park with a ranger. The program is offered in May.

This year, students will be able to photograph their activities in the park. These photos will be transferred to a CD that the children can take back to school. This allows students to share their experiences with families and friends. This program was made possible in part by a grant from the National Park Foundation through the generous support of Kodak, a Proud Partner of America's National Parks.

The park also has a teaching trunk and a website titled *Water in the Environment*. The education programs and the trunk are free. For more information, call the park at (605) 745-4600.

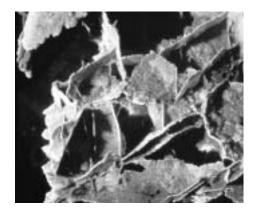
LEARNING ABOUT THE CAVE

CAVE TOUR INFORMATION

All tours are ranger-guided and begin at the visitor center. Tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis at the park visitor center. Tickets must be purchased at least five minutes before tour times. The cave temperature is 53°F (11°C) year round. A jacket or sweater and good walking shoes are recommended.

GARDEN OF EDEN TOUR

This 1-hour tour is our least strenuous tour. It is a wonderful sample of Wind Cave. Small amounts of all of the beautiful cave formations - boxwork, popcorn, and flowstone - are seen along the ¼-mile trail. The tour is designed for people with limited time or abilities. It enters and exits the cave by elevator and has 150 stairs.



NATURAL ENTRANCE TOUR

This tour includes a visit to the natural entrance of Wind



Cave where visitors can learn how the cave got its name. Participants enter through a man-made entrance and journey through the middle level of the cave before exiting by elevator. Wind Cave's famous boxwork is abundant throughout this half-mile walk. Most of the 300 stairs along this route are down. This moderately strenuous tour lasts 1¼-hour.

FAIRGROUNDS TOUR

This 1½-hour tour explores both the upper and middle levels of Wind Cave. Boxwork is abundant along the trail in the middle level of the cave. The upper level of the cave offers visitors the opportunity to travel through larger rooms where popcorn and frostwork can be seen. This is our most strenuous walking tour. The tour enters and exits the cave by elevator and there are 450 stairs along the route with one flight of 90 steps up.

WALKS AND TALKS

DISCOVERY ACTIVITY

Daily, during the summer, ranger talks or demonstrations take place at the visitor center. These programs explain some facet of the park. Topics may include local wildlife, plants, geology, area history, and cave surveying. Check at the visitor center for meeting place and topic.

PRAIRIE HIKE

Explore the park's habitats with a ranger. This 2-hour activity begins at the visitor center. The group will then drive to a nearby trailhead. Hiking boots or sturdy shoes and water are



advised. Check at the visitor center for details.

CAMPFIRE PROGRAM

Become better acquainted with Wind Cave National Park by attending an evening campfire program. These talks are presented nightly during the summer at the Elk Mountain Campground Amphitheater. Topics may include wildlife, plants, geology, park management, and history. The programs last about 45 minutes.

JUNIOR RANGERS

The Junior Ranger Program is an exciting opportunity for children and their families to learn about the park. Through the Junior Ranger Program, youngsters learn about the park's ecosystems, the cave, and the animals. It also helps them learn how they can protect all parts of our environment. Junior Ranger booklets are available for \$1.50 at the park bookstore. Activities are for children up to age 12.

This year, through a special grant made possible in part by the National Park Foundation and the generous support of Kodak, a Proud Partner of America's National Parks, we will be taking photographs of the accomplish-



ments of our Junior Rangers. These youngsters will then be able to share their pictures and their adventures with their families and friends.

SPECIALTY TOURS

CANDLELIGHT TOUR

Experience the cave by candle-light in a less developed, unlighted part of the cave. Each participant will carry a candle bucket. Shoes with non-slip soles are required. No sandals! This tour is limited to 10 people and the minimum age is 8. This more strenuous tour covers 1 mile of rugged trail and lasts 2 hours. Reservations are strongly recommended and accepted no earlier than one month before the tour. Please call the park at (605) 745-4600 for more information.

WILD CAVE TOUR

Explore the cave away from the developed trails. On this 4-hour tour, visitors will be introduced to basic, safe caving. Wear old clothes and gloves, as much of the trip will include crawling. Long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and sturdy, lace-up boots or shoes with non-slip soles are required. The park provides hard hats, lights, and kneepads. Please do not bring jewelry, watches, or

other valuables on the tour. Clothing worn on the Jewel



Cave Wild Cave Tour is not permitted in Wind Cave. This tour is limited to 10 people, and the minimum age is 16. A signed consent form for participants 17 years and under is required. Reservations are required and accepted no earlier than one month before the tour. Please call the park at (605) 745-4600 for more information.

TOURS FOR VISITORS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The visitor center and the cave are accessible to people with limited mobility. Some areas of the cave are accessible to wheelchairs. Please call ahead to make special arrangements or ask at the information desk for a special tour. There are fees charged for these services. Please call the park (605) 745-4600 for more information. The park has a TTY for the hearing impaired available at the same number.

Program and Tour Information

CAVE SAFETY INFORMATION

ll tours are ranger-guided and Aleave from the visitor center. Tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis, except for the Candlelight and Wild Cave Tours. During peak summer visitation, long waits for tours may be encountered. To avoid waits, the best time to visit the cave is during the early hours of the day. During the summer, weekends are good times to visit; Tuesdays and Wednesdays are the busiest days. Reservations for organized groups are available. For more information please call (605) 745-4600.

A light jacket or sweater is recommended for all cave tours, as Wind Cave is 53°F (11°C) throughout the year. Cave trails are dimly lighted and trail surfaces may be uneven, wet, and slippery.

Wear low-heeled shoes with nonslip soles. Do not wear sandals. Ceilings along the tour route are low and may require some bending. There are no restrooms in the cave.

For the protection of the cave, please do not touch or remove rocks or formations. No eating, drinking, chewing tobacco or gum while in the cave. Please do not step off the trail. Photography is permitted, but please no tripods. Pets are not allowed in the cave.

Cave tours are moderately strenuous. Persons with claustro-phobia, heart or respiratory conditions, or other physical limitations should reconsider. A tour is available, by request, for visitors with special needs. Call the park or ask at the information desk.

RESERVATIONS

Most cave tours are firstcome, first-served. However, reservations are either strongly recommended or required for the Candlelight and Wild Cave Tours. We accept reservations for these tours no earlier than one month before the tour. Reservations are also accepted for groups. Please call (605) 745-4600.







Tour Fees*

Tickets must be purchased at least 5 minutes before tour time.

	Garden	Natural	Fairgrounds	Candlelight	Wild Cave
	of Eden	Entrance			
Age 17-61	\$6.00	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$9.00	****\$20.00
Golden Age**	\$3.00	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.50	\$10.00
Age 6-16	\$3.00	\$4.00	\$4.00	***\$4.50	Not Permitted
Under 6	Free	Free	Free	Not Permitted	d Not Permitted

- * Holders of a Golden Access Card receive a 50% discount on tours.
- ** Person must possess a Golden Age Passport to receive the discount.
- *** Minimum age for Candlelight Tour is 8.
- ****Minimum age for the Wild Cave Tour is 16. The fee is \$20.00.

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY:

Contact any park ranger or call the visitor center at 745-4600. After hours call 911.

PROGRAM SCHEDULES



April 6 - May 3, 2003

Visitor Center Open Daily 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Garden of Eden Tour 9:30, 11:30, 1:30, and 3:30

May 4 - 23, 2003

Visitor Center 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Natural Entrance Tour 9:00, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, and 4:30

May 24 - 26, 2003 Memorial Day Weekend

Visitor Center 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Garden of Eden Tour 11:00, 1:00, 3:00, and 5:00

Natural Entrance Tour 8:40, 9:20, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, and 4:30

Fairgrounds Tour 10:00, 12:00, 2:00, and 4:00 Campfire Program 8:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

May 27 - May 31, 2003

Visitor Center 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Garden of Eden Tour 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, and 3:30 Natural Entrance Tour 9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, and 5:00

June 1 - August 16, 2003

Visitor Center 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Garden of Eden Tour 10:40, 12:40, 2:40, and 4:40

Natural Entrance Tour 8:40, 9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00, 5:30, and 6:00.

Fairgrounds Tour 9:30, 10:20, 11:40, 12:20, 1:40, 2:20, 3:40, and 4:20

Candlelight Tour 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Wild Cave Tour 1:00 p.m.

Ranger-led Hike 9:00 a.m.

Campfire Program 9:00 p.m

June 14, 2003 Centennial Celebration

(see website www.nps.gov/wica/ for more information)

Free cave tours (see June schedule above)

Cultural demonstrations 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Resource management talks 9:00 am - 4:00 pm.

No campfire program this evening.

August 17 - September 1, 2003

Visitor Center 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Garden of Eden Tour 10:30, 1:40, 3:40, and 4:30

Natural Entrance Tour 9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, and 5:00

Fairgrounds Tour 9:30, 11:20, 12:20, 1:20, and 3:20

Candlelight Tour 1:30 p.m. daily

Wild Cave Tour 1:00 p.m. Weekends Only Aug. 17, 23, 24, 30, and 31

Campfire Program 8:00 p.m.

September 2 - September 20, 2003

Visitor Center 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Natural Entrance Tour 9:00, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, and 4:30

Evening Program 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday beginning September 4.

September 21 - October 4, 2003

Visitor Center 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Garden of Eden Tour 9:30, 11:30, 1:30, and 3:30

October 5, 2003 - Early April, 2004

Visitor Center Open Daily 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day

Garden of Eden Tour 10:00, 1:00, and 3:00

Tour schedules are subject to change.

Wind Cave Timeline: 1967-Present

1967 --- US 385 bypass was constructed around the headquarters area. --- The first Candlelight Tour was presented.

1969 --- The first elk round-up to reduce herd size occurred.

1970 --- Cave explorers discovered Windy City Lake, 200 feet long, 50 feet wide.

---Cave tour fee: \$1.00.

1971 --- Cave explorers discovered Half-Mile Hall (2,800 ft long). --- Wind Cave length: 10 miles.

1973 --- The first prescribed burn in Wind Cave National Park.
--- Cave explorers rediscovered

Columbian Hall.

1979 ---Wind Cave length: 30 miles.

1980 --- The visitor center was enlarged to its current size. George McGovern spoke in dedication.

1981 --- Alvin McDonald's diary presented to park by Inez Foley.

1982 ---Wind Cave National Park was placed under quarantine for brucellosis by South Dakota. The quarantine was lifted in 1986.

1984 --- The first cave management plan created.

1986 --- The four-millionth visitor entered Wind Cave.

---Backcountry use started.

1987 --- Wind Cave length: 50 miles.

1989 --- A massive search for a lost caver occurred.

1991 ---Southern Comfort was discovered. This huge passage went 650 feet further south than any known passage. It is one of the largest rooms in the cave.

1992 --- Revolving doors were constructed at the Walk-In Entrance.
--- Wind Cave length: 70 miles.

1996 --- Airlocks constructed at the elevator landings.

---Five-millionth visitor to cave.

1999 ---Phantom Lake was discovered with a single set of foot prints on the far side. Speculation is they might be Alvin McDonald's.

2000 --- Highland Creek Wildfire burned 1,136 acres.

2001 --- Wind Cave length: 100 miles. 2002 --- Major cave restoration project

started along tour routes.
---Funding received to study
Chronic Wasting Disease in the

2003 --- Wind Cave National Park is 100 years old!

park's deer and elk herds.

Understanding the Park

Pushing the Limits

In August 1970, during a three week Wind Cave expedition trip, eighteen Windy City Grotto members spent more than 1,300 hours in the cave.

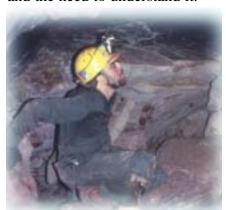
These cavers surveyed more than 10,000 feet of cave passageways. They discovered a large underground lake which they named Windy City Lake, and found an helictite bush that measures nearly six feet in height. Until this time, cavers thought surveying Wind Cave would be a fairly easy task!



Windy City Lake

Caver Lost!

During a mock cave search and rescue exercise in October 1989, a student participating in the National Outdoor Leadership training session became lost. Over one-hundred cavers and emergency personnel assisted in the search. After thirty-six hours, rescuers discovered the student in a previously unexplored portion of Wind Cave. This experience again emphasized the complexity of the cave and the need to understand it.



Cave exploration

Big Rooms Found

The Windy City Grotto launched its second major surveying assault on the massive Wind Cave complex during August 1971. Exploration and survey took place in two major areas of the cave. During the two weeks of work, they surveyed 20,415 feet of cave. They found some of the largest rooms ever discovered in the Black Hills. Half-Mile Hall, (pictured above) the largest room discovered, is 2800 feet long. These discoveries help park managers understand the complexity and unusual resources of Wind Cave.



Revolving doors

Managing the Wind

The first cave management plan was created in 1984. Before this time, no written guidelines were in place to balance the preservation, exploration, and visitation of the cave. This was a major step in protecting and safely managing the cave, understanding the cave environment, and learning how people interact with it. As a result, to minimize unnatural air flow in and out of the cave, revolving doors were installed at the Walk-In Entrance and airlocks were built at the elevator landings.

A Burning Issue

The first prescribed fire at Wind Cave National Park occurred in September 1973. When this fire was planned, few people understood the importance of fire in wildland ecology. Wind Cave National Park was one of the first places to use prescribed fire as a method for wildland management. With this technique a once natural process was returned to the park ecosystems. Prescribed fires reduce fuel loads, halt prairie encroachment by pines, and rejuvenate native plants. They also help reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfires.



Prescribed fire

100 Miles Long

On August 11, 2001, Wind Cave surpassed the one hundredth mile of explored passageway, making it the sixth longest cave in the world and the fourth longest cave in the United States. The one hundred miles comprises an estimated five percent of the potential cave. As of March 2003, the surveyed distance was 107 miles. Explorers today agree with the journal entry of Alvin McDonald, they too "have given up the idea of finding the end of Wind Cave."



Cave exploration

The Park Bookstore

The Black Hills Parks & Forests Association sells books, maps, and other park related publications in visitor centers at Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Monument, Custer State Park, and the Black Hills National Forest. The association publishes books and materials about these areas.

Cooperating associations are non-profit, tax exempt organizations authorized by Congress to promote educational and scientific activities within national parks. All profits from association sales support the educational, interpretive, and research activities of these agencies.

Many different types of publications are available in the bookstores including books specific to Wind Cave National Park and others about local natural and human history. The association will also be carrying special items to celebrate the park's centennial. These publications, maps, and items are available at the bookstore, by mail order, or from the association web site, www.blackhillsparks.org. Membership in the Black Hills Parks and Forests Association supports the organization and entitles members to a 15% discount on all purchases. The membership is \$15.00 per year. For more information call (605) 745-7020.